

## *Fletcher Building Tomorrow's Workforce*

An innovative solution for sourcing and selecting young employees is helping the team at Fletcher Building manage labour shortages and give New Zealand youth a chance at a career.

Fletcher Building, like many New Zealand construction companies, is facing a building boom and a labour shortage. At the same time, says Senior Talent Acquisition Business Partner - Emerging Talent Rochelle Grant, there are too many young people in the country who are unskilled and unemployed.

To solve these issues, the company has moved away from traditional recruiting practices and launched a new online platform, Switch Up ([switchup.co.nz](http://switchup.co.nz)), to make it easy for young people to find and apply for a job.

Fletcher Building is a global organisation with 20,000 employees across 34 different businesses, operating in 40 countries. The Fletcher Building businesses cover the construction, manufacturing and distribution industries. About 10,000 staff work in New Zealand.

The company was finding traditional recruiting processes were discouraging young people for applying for roles, says Rochelle. Many young people don't have the knowledge, life skills or confidence to apply for roles using traditional methods.

"We realised by changing the way we recruit, we could gain access to a pool of talent that would give us a competitive advantage in today's tight labour market."

Working with students from One Tree Hill College, Fletcher Building researched what young job-seekers were looking for and how to take the 'fear' out of the application and selection process and came up with Switch Up.

It's not a typical job board. Job seekers don't need a CV or covering letter; they create a profile and indicate whether they are interested in working in customer service or as a labourer, forklift driver or operator. The platform adopts a conversational tone and job descriptions are replaced by videos of current young Fletcher Building employees demonstrating real jobs and tasks.

**Video Link:**

<https://vimeo.com/286802070>



Another innovative feature is that all applicants receive feedback. Those who are work ready receive congratulatory texts and are invited to an open day, where they are assessed for a job. They get texts leading up to the open day covering interviews, attire and attitude.

Applicants who are not work ready receive emails detailing what was missing in their profile and how they can improve. They also receive regular emails to see if they have filled in gaps in their application and to encourage them to apply again.

Since Switch Up was launched in November 2017, there has been 2000 visits to the website, and 1000 job applicants have created profiles. Fletcher Building has held five open days with 50 prospective candidates and placed 13 of those into fulltime, permanent positions. In March 2018, a new Emerging Talent Business Partner role was created to drive this initiative, and the frequency of open days will increase.



Fletcher Building aims to place 60 candidates into permanent roles through Switch Up by the end of 2019. This number will increase as more business units start recruiting through this channel - currently 10 of the 21 business units in New Zealand use Switch Up.

Alongside the new recruitment process, Fletcher Building has launched a customised four-month development and pastoral care programme, Connect, for new youth talent joining the business. Participants attend Connect during work hours and the programme, delivered by an external provider, Indigenous Growth, provides training in life skills such as budgeting, communication, time management, goal setting and confidence.

The first course started in November 2017, with a pilot group of six, another course began in March 2018 with a group of 11, and a group of 17 began a course in June 2018. Connect is scheduled to run every three months.

One of managers at Placemakers had this to say about a young staff member who took in the Connect programme. "I have seen her grow and gain knowledge. Her confidence to set a goal and benchmark means we can now support her to reach her potential."

Matthew Taylor was the first candidate employed via the Switch Up platform.

"I saw a Switch Up ad on social media and then went to the website. I watched the videos and they were good because I got to see what the jobs looked like," the 29-year-old says.

"At the open day, I got to meet people from different businesses. We had a tour around the Humes factory and I met a couple of the senior managers. There wasn't the same kind of pressure and nerves you feel with a job interview."

Matthew was offered a job as a welder with concrete pipe manufacturer Humes, one of the Fletcher Building businesses.

Humes Production Manager Bruce Huata was impressed with his new staff member, who came to his role "work ready". "Our recruitment team is in talks with the Switch Up programme again this year to hopefully bring on more people like Matt," he says.

IF YOU WANT MORE INFORMATION,  
TOOLS OR RESOURCES TO MAKE  
YOUR WORKPLACE MORE INCLUSIVE

Visit [diversityworks.nz.org.nz](https://diversityworks.nz.org.nz)  
or call 0800 DIVERSITY (348 377)